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Plug-in hybrid makes appearance at 'Beyond Oil' conference

REDMOND, WASH. — The newest member of the city of Seattle transportation fleet will make its public debut Thursday. The plug-in hybrid electric vehicle (PHEV) is the first of dozens headed to the state as part of a demonstration project coordinated by Idaho National Laboratory.

The PHEV's appearance will help kick off this week's alternative transportation conference "Beyond Oil: Transforming Transportation — A National Demonstration Project." Co-sponsored by INL, the conference will discuss plug-in hybrids and other possibilities for curbing the country's reliance on oil.

To evaluate whether PHEVs could help reduce petroleum use and become widely acceptable, INL has teamed with public and private agencies throughout Seattle and the state of Washington to drive plug-in hybrids in real-world conditions. Cities, counties, ports, utilities, colleges and environmental groups have added PHEVs to the vehicle fleets they use for day-to-day activities. INL will analyze data from the cars to evaluate gas and electricity use, average and top speeds, miles per charge, and charge timing and duration.

Like conventional hybrids, PHEVs run on electricity part of the time. But they use larger batteries than conventional hybrids and are recharged from a standard electrical socket. Once fully commercialized, PHEVs should be able to run for 10 to 20 miles or more on electric power alone before reverting to conventional hybrid operation.

Preliminary demonstration tests reveal PHEVs use about as much electricity in a year of standard driving as a three-person household's water heater consumes in five months. Current PHEVs get more than 100 miles per gallon in urban driving for the first 10 to 20 miles after being fully charged. By using PHEVs for day-to-day activities, the fleet demonstrations will provide real-time, real-life information to gauge the practicality of widespread PHEV use.

Seattle-Tacoma-area fleets will test 14 of the more than 30 demo vehicles throughout the state. Washington organizations testing PHEVs include:

- City of Seattle, with Seattle City Light
- Port of Seattle
- King County
- Puget Sound Clean Air Agency
- Tacoma Power
- Port of Chelan County
- City of Wenatchee
- Green IT Alliance
- Benton County Public Utility District
- Douglas County Public Utility District
- Chelan County Public Works
- University of Washington
- Walla Walla Community College
- Wenatchee Valley College
- Energy Northwest

Most of the demonstration cars are being converted from conventional hybrids to PHEVs using high-power lithium ion batteries and conversion kits from Hymotion, in cooperation with the Kirkland, Wash.-based Green Car Company. Data loggers, cellular modems and GPS units from Seattle-based V2Green, Inc., will collect data and send it to INL for analysis.

Combined with PHEVs in New York, Hawaii, California, Arizona and other states, more than 140 PHEVs around the nation will feed data to INL by the end of 2008 as part of the U.S. Department of Energy's Advanced Vehicle Testing Activity. INL is the AVTA's lead lab for field performance and life testing of advanced technology vehicles.

[Read more about the Washington state PHEV demonstrations.](#)

[Read more about INL's Advanced Vehicle Testing Activity projects.](#)

[Read more about the Beyond Oil conference.](#)

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